

ABC
Dear Paul W

6/15/77

It was good of you to call me in Dallas yesterday morning, I think while you were still asleep. You sounded it and I would have liked to have been.

Art is among those who phoned after I got home today. He had spoken to you.

This is a brief report to you and others, including those I'd hoped to see, on what happened. Some of it is sort of on the comic side but it was all very good.

I was wrong to refuse to do the A.M. America Show. Now that I did it I know it. I wanted to continue my work and get out there. But until I was forced to stop and think I did not realize how much I accomplished in a very short period of time most of which was devoted to helping reporters on the Ray escape. Lasting to 3-4 in the morning, too, and beginning early.

When I got the request I asked the local Dallas ABC station to offer to originate from there. I also asked ABC N.Y. to do this. They finally explained to the Dallas station that they can't have the Washington questioning as well and the cost is 4 times as much. Two of the news staff of the Dallas station really pressured me to accept. But reporters still believe that getting your name in the paper in and of itself is important. I don't. There was so much pressure I decided to phone Jim Cesar. His was a sound and persuasive view, that this provided an opportunity to let the major media and a fair part of the TV public know that there is a third view, not that of say the FBI's and the Lanes. He was right.

Jim's one concern was that I not time myself too much. I had not thought of this. He was right. I zonked out sitting at my desk this afternoon and after Lil moved me to my chair three times thereafter. But it is because I listened to him that I did not accept the ABC offer to fly me to LA from the show. They apparently did want me much and I think I now know why.

(For that matter early in the Ray matter so did CBS. Wild what they told Lil, but it was before I learned how to operate the special Dallas "hold" on a single phone. They told her from NY that they were in a bind and really needed me. Happily they did not reach me.)

I think it was in a story in the New York Times that made only the very last editions, those that did not get out of NYC, by Mo ~~Waldron~~ Waldron. Others on the Times and other papers did use what they got from me but I'm told Mo went into me some. I think this is what reached the research/production staff of the A.M. America Show. In addition I did an impromptu interview with their Dallas station too late for the Saturday ABC net evening TV news but it excited them so much they phoned New York. When told it was too late for the evening new they asked about piping it for the late news. It was carried on the net then.

There was a UPI story for Sundays that has a completely fabricated lead and what says opposite what I said and opposite what the rest of the story says. I never believed there was an external conspiracy to get Ray out of jail. If I do not in tiredness return to the correction remind me. It was not by UPI.

Everybody in Dallas was just wonderful to me. I'll probably say more about this later.

So was ABC. They even sent their stretch model Lincoln limousine to the airport to meet me. Really. They take a conventional Lincoln and send it to a special place in Dallas where they cut it in half and add a section. Most comfortable and quietest car I've ever been in. Contrary to their forms for such purposes they put me up in a suite at the Warwick. (I'd probably have been happier with a Turkish bath to relax me.) I've never had an entire suite before and I have no need for one again. But I started waking up early and after almost 6 hrs. I did. I was ready a half hour before pickup time so I phoned the show to tell them that if they had another pickup earlier I was ready. Here is where it gets richer. The guy who answered the phone told me Mr. Weisberg, the limousines are all scheduled but we thank you. Besides, Amy (Hirsch) is coming to get you herself. She NEVER does this. And you will never see a more beautiful woman." It was no exaggeration. She began several hours earlier because for some reason she wanted to talk to me. On the way to the studio, while they were making me up, after the airing until I had to leave. She appears to be the brains of the show. Brains as well as incredibly physical beauty she appears to have.

In person Hartman appears to be identical with the character he portrayed in some hospital series of years ago. They did have me on the prime spot, the last segment of the first hour. After we were on dead air he reached over and said he'd like to talk to me more.

I said I'd wait until the second hour was over. He thanked me but said he had to take his wife to the obstetrician.

Not long after we parted, when I was in the reception or hold room on the floor below, whatever they call it, he was down to question me more. Only to have the producer and others down almost immediately to pull him back to the set. He asked me to wait and I agreed, only to be dragged off by the staff because of the limo schedule. The one fancy-schmancy they have that time of the day, according to the chauffeur, had to get me to the airport and back in time to get him and his wife to the doctor.

But while I was there just about all of the top part of the production staff looked me up. From past experience I know that this not only is not necessary but subjects them to other pressures. So I take it as a measure of the impact on these pros. (By the way, Amy began by telling me that she did not like Lane. And hoped that made me happy. I never mentioned Lane to her.)

What else was unusual ~~extra~~ is the reception I received from Aynesworth. When the man with whom I stayed, the other person wounded in the JFK assassination, picked me up at the airport I told him I'd be asking help of Hugh and would like to go there first. He said I could call him from his home. I said that because Hugh is the other side and we'd never met or spoken I'd rather just say hello in person. From there on it was all stars and flowers. He said he was glad to meet me, that while we probably disagreed I am the only one on my side he respected, and he did respect me. This for openers. He did try to help me. We had several meetings. I think I'm getting one of the things I want from another sources so I told him to hold off on those efforts to see if I do. He is also trying to get me some TV footage, film, from people who ~~were~~ dead set against it. Or, I can't lose. I was quite surprised to find that he wrote a friendly story about me. It appeared in yesterday's paper. I neither expected it nor asked for it. We'll make a copy.

Furthermore, I expect him to do some stories with which we will agree.

What follows is confidential.

I have always had a friendly relationship with Henry Wade, the Dallas DA. I saw him yesterday morning. For so long I was six hours late phoning the A.M. America people so they could prepare the questions for Hartman. (Only the first one or two were prepared. The rest were ad lib and I hope I did not show it.) When I walked in after the handshake and the greetings he said, good-ole-countryside style, which is his natural style, "When are you going to give me a case I can take to court?"

I like him personally and I believe, from what I have seen, and I have been in his office and overheard phone conversations, that he really does seek justice. Including by means other than prosecution. For Dallas he is a very liberal man. And deservedly popular.

Tom Dillard, Morning News photographer, now chief of their photographic department, gave me what nobody knows existed, the other pictures he took of the impact on the curbstone by the missed shot. It appears that the FBI never returned the negative of the shot the Commission used. This is to say the best.

There is more. I hope that I can remember what I did not have time to make notes on. I look back with some gratification on the yield of two non-weekend days, the last day ending at about 2:30 so I could get to New York. (I was not idle on the weekend, though.) Except for a signed affidavit I really do have all I'd hoped for from a week. I'll draft the affidavit and get it executed, by mail.

I wonder what I might have done if the Ray escape had not been an all-day, all-night phone business. I did use remarkable fine judgement in telling those who phoned where I could be reached. I should say her judgement was perfect. There is no time I have not left Dallas without regret I could not stay longer. no time without meaningful accomplishment, no time without new and worthwhile contacts.

The man in whose home I stayed phoned tonight. He missed the ABC airing this a.m. because he is making up the time he spent with me. (I know this-he did not tell me.) He told me that when he got home tonight his fine human being/wife told him there were times she could feel the fire from my eyes. Even Jim and Lil did not say that!

If I had been able to remain in Dallas longer I'd have spoken to Will Fritz. I think something may have come of it. But even Harry Dean phoned this a.m. to tell Lil, among other things, "Bravo!" So I guess it was right and good. But I am sorry not to have gotten out there. The accumulation of my absence is more than 5,000 pages. Best,